Exploring the Spatial Narratives
of the Mi'kmaw Exhibits in the Museum of Natural History

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Abstract

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Spatial narratives are a misused component of the Museum of Natural History that contribute to the misrepresentation of the Mi'kmaq, their history, and culture. The Museum of Natural History problematically represents Indigenous peoples through spatial narratives that communicate wider issues occurring at natural history museums in general. Methods used were composed of physical visits to the site complemented with interviews conducted with senior staff. Findings reveal that with proper interactions and collaborations with local Mi'kmaw communities it is possible to properly represent Mi'kmaw history and culture. However, as visitors can be highly impacted by museum environments, it is crucial to understand the colonial connotations of natural history museums and their role in displaying the Mi'kmaq may not be appropriate. To be a more inclusive and neutral space, natural history museums should dedicate whole spaces to learning about the Mi'kmaq with active collaborations from the local Indigenous communities.

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Chapter 1

1.1 Introduction

In a recent article, Global News interviewed Mi'kmaw historian Donald Julian who imagines an Indigenous-owned and operated institution: a museum environment where Indigenous persons could ask questions about their own history, depict their own truths about residential schools, analyze their treaties with Canada, present ancient artifacts, and virtually have the opportunity to tell their own stories (McSheffrey, 2020). Currently, this type of institution would be a welcome facet to complement our current Nova Scotian museums. The current representations of Mi'kmaw culture and heritage in local museums is problematic, particularly, the manner in which they tend to be tucked away in corners of the museums as a small inclusion of the greater whole.

Halifax's Museum of Natural History is one of the local museums that is guilty of placing Mi'kmaw exhibits in a corner separate of the other natural history narratives. Because this museum is in the heart of the city, it is worth analyzing as its audience is far greater than many other museums within the province. Therefore, with such a large audience, it is important to consider the approaches being used to educate Nova Scotians about the Mi'kmaq. As a potential remedy to this problematic representation, McSheffrey (2020) argues that with support from the government and donations the local Mi'kmaw communities could create an institution of their own to truly have the opportunity to tell their own history and illustrate their importance alongside Canadians.

1.2 Research Problem and Key Objectives

My research investigates the problematic representation of Mi'kmaw history and culture in the Museum of Natural History. It is problematic to have a Mi'kmaw exhibit in the Museum of Natural History as its primary focus is on the past which then causes visitors to view the Mi'kmaq through a historical lens. While it may have been appropriate in the past to place the history and culture of Mi'kmaw in natural history museums, it is no longer acceptable as no other groups are placed in this archaic narrative. This research seeks to answer the following questions: How were the exhibits arranged to offer a spatial narrative of Mi'kmaw culture and heritage? How does the spatial narrative of these exhibits represent the Mi'kmaq? How did these particular narratives come to be? What is the message they are trying to communicate? Does the museum show both the past as well as the present contemporary content or voices of the Mi'kmaq? How has the representation of the Mi'kmaq evolved over time at the Museum of Natural History?

In addressing these research questions, my thesis will demonstrate that spatial narratives are a vital component of the problematic representation concerning the Mi'kmaq at the Museum of Natural History. While the Museum of Natural History will be my area of study, my literature review will illustrate how communicated through spatial narratives, this particular museum is only one example of natural history museums problematically representing Indigenous peoples as this is a wider issue occurring at natural history museums in general.

1.3 Thesis Overview

In the second chapter of my thesis, I will present a literature review critically analysing academic research related to museums and natural history museums. In particular, I will strive to highlight the connection between natural history museums and spatial narratives in relation to the misrepresentation of Indigenous persons. The literature review will also investigate concepts such as spatial narrative theory, the morphology of museum spaces and architecture, space syntax analysis and syntactic layout, and the three types of museum visitor movement: spatially random movement, spatially dictated movement, and spatially guided movement.

The third chapter will be primarily focused on outlining the methods I had used to conduct my research throughout the course of this project as well as defining the study area and the limitations I experienced. Chapter four will offer my interpretations and analysis of the Museum of Natural History Mi'kmaw exhibits as well as my interviews with the upper-level staff who had participated in my study.

The final chapter of my study will then provide the reader with a concise summary of the study's findings as well as the more significant results discovered. For others seeking to conduct similar studies, I will then also provide a brief overview of recommendations to illustrate what I would do differently if I were to do this project again.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Museums are invaluable, informal education sites where the messages are displayed through a space that is organized and made up of artifacts and significant objects. Rather than having verbalized messages that are taught in a classroom setting, museums allow individuals to absorb the messages physically presented around them whilst moving through the museum exhibit spaces. Through the utilization of spatial narrative, museums chronicle the various histories and stories of both human and natural histories. In this literature review I will be assessing scholarly literature that critically examines my research problems concerning the Museum of Natural history. Through my use of the following literature, I hope to offer contextual value to the reader about the significance of my study and why the representation of marginalized groups, such as the Mi'kmaq in Nova Scotia, matter.

The following literature review will be displayed in three sections: the history of museums and natural history museums, critical museum studies, and spatial narrative.

2.2 The History of Museums and Natural History Museums

To understand natural history museums and the politics surrounding their spatial narratives, we must first explore the history of museums and how their background is still relevant to today's museums. In an analysis of the history of museums, Günay (2012) has conducted an important study regarding the concept, history, and development of museums. Günay (2012) describes how the origin of the word 'museum' comes from the nine Greek 'Muses' who were the goddesses of inspiration ruling over the arts and sciences in Ancient

Greece. The initial purpose of museums was to house books, not unlike today's libraries but with various antiques and collections of artifacts also included (Manssour et al. 2016). The educational role of museums today showcases its artistic history by presenting and conserving various collections of art and science by showcasing human history through aestheticism.

The first shift in museum evolution occurred during China's Shang Dynasty to include tombs, terracotta warriors and their horses, sculptures, paintings, metalwork, and poetry (Manssour et al. 2016). Meanwhile in Europe, due to the spread of Christianity during the Medieval period and into the Renaissance era from the 5th to 17th century, museums first existed as collections of art, precious antiques, and scientific materials which were to be kept inside of palaces or churches (Günay, 2012). In England, for example, the famous artworks of Antony Van, Leonardo Da Vinci, and Raphael, were collected by King Charles I (Manssour et al. 2016). Those collections gave way to the first official museums in France as the collections within the Palace of Versailles. The famous Louvre museum had also once been a palace but had later been transformed and established as a museum by Louis XIV to present his personal collections (Manssour et al. 2016). These collections were not openly shown, however, as only those of the upper class could access the collections as a luxury.

Graña (1967) explains this separation of class well, detailing how many of the pieces on display in contemporary art museums today are symbols that are "... inseparable from great names, great houses, great dynasties, great titles, great wealth, and great power..." (p. 22). These collections have become instrumental in glorifying very specific socio-political rankings. An example of this can be seen during World War I, as in Germany and Russia those of whom had power at the time reflected the contents of their museums. These museums were created to then glorify Nazi figures, the war men, and later the Russian Revolutions, which can be seen in the

Winter Palace in St Petersburg Russia (Manssour et al. 2016). After the wars, many Western European museums had become independent prompting a change in the architecture of museum design as architecture schools had been created. A prominent example of this architectural shift is seen in the Guggenheim Museum which was built in 1943 in New York. The natural history museum movement then continued to spread throughout the 20th century as new national museums were created in North and South America, Australia, South Africa, and Egypt. Natural history museums also evolved further to a modern architectural style and had globally become commonly associated with cultural and educational visitor centres.

In reference to today's natural history museums, Manssour et al. (2016) explains how during the 18th and 19th centuries the introduction of the Industrial Revolution and its developments in science, technology, and arts made museums more accessible, as public museums were created regardless of class. While palaces had been still been used to as the base architecture of museums to display its upper class and royal histories, the French had begun including artifacts from Egypt which was believed to give their museums higher importance.

These elitist values still expose themselves in today's stage of museum evolution. From art museums to natural history museums, Graña (1967) investigates whose heritage is being displayed and why. This is relevant in order to consciously understand museum history, as these institutions were created for those in power, the upper class, and royalty. Both Günay (2012) and Dunn et al. (2019) dig deeper into this concept by investigating the controversial ideology in which museums exhibit 'the other' as well as the origins of when, "where, and in what form art objects and artefacts first began to be transported from non-western to western nations for display in the museums of western capitals" (Dunn et al., 2019, p. 253). Displaying both natural

and man-made artifacts that have not been offered willingly from the original owners is a relevant and longstanding issue with museum history.

These developments gave way to the rise of natural history museums as museums no longer had to contend with the popular doctrines of theology (Farrington, 1915). Museums were now able to investigate natural curiosities. Farrington (1915, 201) quotes Murray to explain this shift in museum focus: "The wonders of nature had an extraordinary fascination for men of science, who were constantly on the lookout for them. Any variation of the ordinary type of the common object was eagerly sought after, and the more extraordinary it was the greater was its attraction. Hence museums had a tendency to represent the abnormal rather than the normal, what was rare rather than what was common." The concept of collecting the 'uncommon' or 'rare' arises in context with my study as Indigenous artefacts were included in these early natural history collections. This practice has come to encode them as well as the people who made these objects as being rare and uncommon components of the natural world. Farrington (1915) discusses this, describing how the desired items for collection pertained to birds, insects, plants, minerals and rocks, and the skeletons of extinct animals such as the mammoth. These artifacts were to be arranged and classified to be studied in the museum as they were rare and typically unseen, of which included wax figures of Native Americans with weapons and utensils taken for the exhibits.

2.2.1 Today's Natural History Museums as Informal Learning Settings

Leaving behind its history of pure observation in the late 20th century, contemporary museum typology had also evolved to become more diverse with "science and technology, anthropology and ethnology, archaeology, arts, and natural history" (Manssour et al., 2016,

p.10). Additionally, Günay (2012) expresses that this transformation of museums had also come to provide information about natural and cultural findings. This type of information pertains to the inclusion of natural history museums and the further inclusion of cultural and ethnic focused museums. This pedagogical change in content led to more progressive educational approaches by allowing school children, as well as other visitors, to visit museums and physically interact with the presented materials so that they could utilize their bodies as kinetic learning sources (Günay, 2012). Filippoupoliti and Koliopoulos (2014) build on of this new type of interactive learning by discussing the subject of formal and informal learning settings, specifically in science museums and natural history museums. By analysing the methods of dissemination of science history and academic discussion, natural science history museums displayed scientific objects as art and later integrated collections related to physics, chemistry, as well as the natural sciences with objects such as taxidermied animals. Starting in the 20th century, science museums began to take on an appearance of a laboratory rather than a gallery wherein demonstrations and experiments can occur. With this, Filippoupoliti and Koliopoulos (2014) revealed that the core educational tools used by science museums consist of: guided tours, educational programs and workshop. Due to this new type of interaction, Günay (2012) explains that museums are more actively educating their visitors in a sociological and psychological way.

2.2.2 The Level of Influence Museums can have on Children

Peacock and Pratt (2011) delve into this concept by investigating from a sociocultural perspective how youth respond to informal learning environments including both museums and science learning centres. While exploring how the setting affects young children, Peacock and Pratt (2011found that there is actually little impact to their interpretation and learning from the

presented signage and micro-contexts. This is caused partly by how easily children can be distracted in a new and exciting environment outside of the classroom, and, that it doesn't feel necessary to read signage due to the informal environment. This is to say that while most children do not read signage, they do still however learn a great deal through other means.

Peacock and Pratt (2011) found that most museums "...have produced materials, tasks, trails, workshops, websites and worksheets in one form or another that can be directed either by their own LPs, teachers, parents or children themselves." (p. 17). The role of contemporary natural history museums can thus be seen through these active learning opportunities. Günay's (2012, 1257) research highlights the importance of this feature in today's museum activities, illustrating how theorists believe that by interacting with the artifacts, school children develop in an "intellectual, physical, emotional, cognitive and social" fashion via the physical associations created through that interaction. Therefore, the impacts young children experience from interacting with museum exhibits can have significant influences on the discourses that follows that educational experience (Peacock and Pratt, 2011). This is in association with the misrepresentation of minority groups, such as the Mi'kmaq, presented in natural history museums. This is a relevant point for my study as the misrepresentation of under-represented groups can allow the historical discourse of inequality between races to continue on through today's youth via their museum interactions with these cultural exhibits.

2.2.3 The Level of Influence Museums can have on Adults

Museums can also have impacts that are just as influential with adults. Tinning (2018) discusses museum exhibitions addressing what has now been coined as 'difficult matters,' focusing on horrendous events "such as rape and mass murder – and how such exhibitions may

evoke ethical change" (p. 1). Museums can accomplish this through the use of vulnerability as a concept in the exhibit. Stemming from feminist ethics, it is believed that museums can inspire widespread empathy to unsettle visitors and provoke what could be an ethical change echoing through generations encouraging a better future. Pressing this point further, Adams (2007) quotes, "Rounds (2006) views the museum as a site for "identity work," which can be defined as "the processes through which we construct, maintain, and adapt our sense of personal identity, and persuade other people to believe in that identity." (Rounds, 2006, as cited in Adams, 2007, p. 393)" Therefore, if museums and learning about the difficult matters of history have the power to alter one's identity, it is imperative that museums recognize their ethical responsibility in museum pedagogy.

From a similar lens, the natural history museums of today prioritize the learning and understanding of climate change awareness. Through the emphasis on the importance of climate change along with human responsibility, natural history museums can visually display the natural world directly in comparison to today's environmental degraded natural world to spark greater levels of compassion in visitors. And, by prioritizing climate change as a subject to teach visitors, this ethical inclusion of information can result in the changes to visitors' daily lives. For example, visitors may begin to consciously make more sustainable choices, even if it is a small action like not using disposable straws anymore.

Therefore, if instead museums had more ethically educated visitors about the history and culture of the Mi'kmaq visitors may no longer associate them with a primitive age no longer relevant to today's society. Therefore, by actively collaborating to foster Indigenous pedagogies as well as environmental literacy with students, natural history museums represent an important role when educating the public (Seillier, 2014). This is a common method that natural history

museum's use to educate visitors about the climate change awareness. Achieved through the inclusion and engagement with Aboriginal and Indigenous communities, natural history museums collaboratively increase cultural knowledge of Indigenous communities and share what is called their "...Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) or Traditional Knowledge (TK)" (Seillier, 2014, p. 38) while learning of climate change adaptation strategies.

2.2.4 The Future of Museums?

The next phase in the evolution of museums is rapidly approaching we will begin to see the recent developments of technologies being used to deliver information within 'smart museum' exhibits (Korzun et al. 2017). With the future evolution of museums and the creation of virtual museums, we can begin to witness the creation of cyber spatial narratives (Dunn et al., 2019; Korzun et al., 2017). To connect this new type of museum to narrative theory, we will come to see that narratives are being constructed around objects and artifacts viewed online rather than in the physical space with record-based descriptions in the exhibits. Dunn et al. (2019) explores this concept of narrative and how it will come to evolve within the new phase of museums, expressing that to coordinate cultural interrelatedness virtual and smart museums may begin to utilize what is called object biographies or object itineraries. This would be when one can view museum material online and simply click or search for an item or artifact and be presented with all of the history and information about it.

Now that we have explored and acknowledged the history of museums, we can then see how much these institutions have evolved over time. Today, we can see that museums are not architecturally designed or built to resemble the palaces of royalty. The public, regardless of

class and privilege, are allowed inside as it is no longer a luxury space. Science is prevalent in museums now more than ever with society no longer dominated by religion. There are now features such as digital designs and other technology to educate visitors. As we can see, the museums of today are no longer meant to protect and preserve specimens and artifacts behind a glass wall. Instead, they are focussed on being open, public, and informal education centres that are now attempting to inclusively tell the stories of groups whose voices were previously excluded by their Eurocentric structures. It is essential to understand the history of museums, as this offers the historical context necessary so that one can properly assess the museums of today.

2.3 Critical Museum Studies - Natural History Museums and the Misrepresentation of BIPOC groups

To begin we must understand the presence of structural racism in museum institutions as a whole. Museums are complicit and responsible for creating cultural and physical hierarchies within their exhibits (Lynch and Alberti, 2010). An example of this can be found when investigating the history of just how natural history museums had come to collect the artifacts they display to the public. Delving into this concept, Davis (2019) discusses natural history museums throughout Europe with a focus on the UK. He poses the question of whether natural history museums are inherently racist. To illustrate that they are, Davis (2019) explores the case study of Hans Sloan, an Irish physician who collected plant specimens and stole artifacts in the Caribbean during the mid-1700s on behalf of the Natural History Museum in London. Stevens (1982), argues this point further demanding that “the act of collecting ethnographic specimens must be seen as an act of taking possession, both physically and symbolically, of some of the essence of individuals as well as whole societies and cultures.”

Natural history museums tend to represent colonialism by glorifying western power as they seized control of other countries. A particular act of control was exploiting the guides who had led many European scientists around areas such as the Amazon (Davis, 2019). These European scientists would then steal and plagiarize the guides knowledge by later publishing the information they had learnt as their own without giving proper credit (Davis 2019). It is acts like these that ultimately keep other cultures 'progressively behind' westerners. From this, Davis (2019) details the manner in which natural history museums in the UK had profited off the backs of slavery and how museums need to be held openly accountable for the history that they're presenting in order to truly acknowledge the past.

However, this issue is not simply restricted to natural history museums in the past. Today, as urban centers become more diversified, museums and natural history museums have come to gain a lot of attention for their problematic representation of minority groups. Loukaitou-Sideris and Grodach (2004, 50) even describe museums to be "central battlegrounds in the 'culture and history wars'," as museums face controversy when choosing what constitutes as art or artifacts. Rodriguez (2020) recounts the annual events that occur every Indigenous Peoples' Day at the American Museum of Natural History. A protest group and artist-activist collective called 'Decolonize This Place' was quoted to have been chanting, "rename the day, remove the statue, and respect ancestors" (Rodriguez, 2020). This chant was in reference to their desire to take down the statue of Theodore Roosevelt in front of the museum, who is displayed on horseback and followed by "subservient Native American and African figures" (Rodriguez, 2020). Founded in 1869, the American Museum of Natural History was associated with Franz Boas, who, during his early work with the museum performed various the unethical practices which included the theft Indigenous peoples' bones and conducting secret autopsies (Rodriguez,

2020). With this knowledge of the museum's past, the primary demand by the 'Decolonize This Place' group were to have the American Museum of Natural History return the stolen human remains and artifacts in their possession. Their other demands were to amend the historical inaccuracies in Indigenous exhibits, and to remove offensive, stereotypical, or problematic representations of human subjects. Chen (2016) also discusses these same protests detailing how the Artist-Activist collective observed many other problematic aspects of the museum whilst on an educational tour. These problematic aspects consisted of 'native' artifacts which had been poached from different continents as well as scenes of their 'primitive' societies being visually depicted, all while tour guides deliver their own explanations of the exhibits (Chen, 2016). However, such problematic displays also exist outside of Indigenous representation. Other problematic aspects of the museum had included the "Hall of Islam" which had depicted the Muslim world as being anti-modern and primitive, and the "Hall of African Peoples", in which Black bodies have been displayed as specimens, rather than human beings. This is all in stark contrast to the "Man's Rise to Civilization" exhibit, which placed Western modernity and technology as the pinnacle of social development (Chen, 2016). Despite the overwhelming evidence of racism in these exhibits, these annual protests by the 'Decolonize This Place' group received minimal media coverage, even as these types of protests about natural history museums have been emerging more rapidly throughout Europe and North America (Rodriguez, 2020).

Today, we can see evidence of natural history museums attempting to change. Duffield (2020) discusses this in a recent news article in reference to the Natural History Museum in London, highlighting the museum's plan to review their collections in response to the Black Lives Matter movement. This caused the museum to undertake an audit of the statues, rooms, and individual items/artifacts which individual staff members believed encouraged structural

racism. Duffield (2020) quotes one of the curators saying “"science, racism and colonial power were inherently entwined", and that any collections deemed "problematic" could be renamed or even removed.”

2.3.1 Natural History Museums and the Misrepresentation of the Indigenous Peoples

This ideology of other races being ‘less developed’ and living in a less ‘modern’ fashion is a popular subtheme displayed in exhibits concerning Indigenous peoples. Indigenous groups as well as other colonized peoples are represented as primitive, as if they are living relics of the European past without any history of their own pre-colonization (Hooper-Greenhill, 2007). While reviewing the First People’s Hall at the Canadian Museum of Civilization, Phillips and Phillips (2005) argued that the reasoning behind Canada’s first National Museum had only begun collecting the culture of Indigenous people was because it was believed that the country’s Indigenous peoples were rapidly disappearing. While there were political choices being made at the time to improve the relationship between Canadians and Indigenous persons, such as the closure of residential schools, the intention to preserve their culture is problematic. It would have been more appropriate to instead celebrate their current existence alongside Canadians within our state, as Indigenous cultures remains strong today.

In a similar vein, at the American Museum of Natural History, Rodriguez (2020) analyzes that, “Natural history museum practices today are still guided by some of the key assumptions of anthropology’s founding period, including the belief in a civilizational hierarchy, with Northern European cultures figured as superior to all others.” This ideology structurally affects the way ethnographic exhibits are presented, as exhibits of non-European peoples are framed as if these groups are almost ‘frozen’ in time. Through this, with the ideology that

Northern Europeans were superior, scientists put great effort on themselves to participate in what is called ‘salvage anthropology’ (Rodriguez, 2020). This is when it is believed that the existence of what were considered to be ‘primitive cultures’ had to be preserved as they were “on the verge of extinction”. Stevens (1982) adds to this deliberating on how, “For years arguments have raged about whether the material culture of non-western peoples should be viewed in primarily a scientific or an aesthetic light. These views reflect curators' attitudes towards non-western people.”. The prejudice of the curators involved in creating cultural exhibits is important to acknowledge then, as it will be revealed through the use of language and other visual choices with Indigenous artifacts being called ‘cultural mementos’ or ‘works of primitive art’ which embraces the superior Northern European ideology (Stevens, 1982). The resulting impressions from these types of spatial narratives being presented are that the “Indigenous and non-European peoples belong on display with fauna, flora, rocks, and minerals.” (Rodriguez, 2020). This, however, is not the case with the other sections of the museum that are related to European and Western cultures, particularly as European and Western groups do not have labeled sections of the museums like their colonized counterparts. This separation from the ‘normal’ and ‘today’s people’ perpetuates the narrative of the Indigenous being outdated, primitive, and pre-civilized. Rodriguez (2020) critiques this further describing how Indigenous exhibits in natural history museums “foster the segregation, exoticization, and “othering” of non-European cultures.”

2.3.2 Combatting Misrepresentation with Anti-Racism Initiatives

Museums are rooted in Eurocentric beliefs and the structural systems of racial inequality. Despite this however, there has been resistance within the museum community to amend this. Investigating the existence of institutional racism in natural history museums, Rodriguez (2020)

examines the Musée de l'Homme or the Trocadéro Museum. The Musée de l'Homme was built in 1878 originally to house what were "tens of thousands of objects bought or stolen during French scientific expeditions" (Rodriguez, 2020). But by 1937, French anthropologist Paul Rivet who had been a correspondent with Franz Boas became the director of the museum. Contrastingly to Boas, Rivet was known to have been an adamantly antiracist individual. And, from the very creation of exhibits, Rodriguez (2020) argues that the museums curators had aimed to "historicize the museum's historic relationship with scientific racism." to stay with Rivet's vision of a restoration and modernization of the collections.

In order to combat the colonial roots of natural history museums, today, Fischer et al. (2017) proposes to have museum professionals meet to discuss the institutional wrongs of museums. Through their research, Fischer et al. (2017) demonstrate how all aspects must be considered when looking at racism in academia. In particular, the narratives displayed through signage and word choice is incredibly important. Smith and Foote (2017) show in their research how by using different methodologies when examining museums and museum assemblages, one can analyse the content for different narratives and messages. These methodologies consist of historical analysis to examine how the exhibit has changed over time, locative analysis which considers how different places and events are portrayed, semiotic analysis, which investigates the symbology utilized to communicate with the visitors, and also discourse analysis, which analyses the language used (including written, audio, and/or sign language) to tell the underlying narratives (Smith and Foote, 2017). Hooper-Greenhill (2007) also notes this problematic detail within museums utilizing phrasing such as "savage races" when discussing under-represented groups. Vocabulary is incredibly important when discussing topics surrounding oppression, privilege, and intersectionality, as they must be introduced properly in order to fully educate all

involved to then discuss possible ways to improve or repair the system. Smith and Foote (2017) even come to focus on how "social, economic, and cultural power relationships are established, maintained, strengthened, and propagated through the use of language" (p.134) and how from these language choices the narratives presented become skewed based on the social cultural inequalities of the time.

2.3.3 The Impacts of Misrepresentation and Public Memory

One of the many reasons why it is so detrimental to misrepresent marginalized groups, is due to how museums and their spatial narratives come to affect the public memory through education. In reference to my earlier section, discussing the history of Natural History Museums, Peacock and Pratt (2011), Günay (2012), Tinning (2018), and Adams (2007) who additionally quotes Rounds (2006), all discuss how exhibits can profoundly impact both adult and child visitors.

In museums, public memory is constructed through the organization and assemblage of exhibits. As museums are inherently historical education centers, it is imperative that these institutions recognize their key role in upholding structural racism in society. Public memory is intertwined with ethics, as there is a certain amount of privilege displayed when one can choose to portray a historic event or an entire ethnic culture however they desire (Wallace, 2011). While having a prominent voice as a Western or European museum, these particular institutions need to recognize their influence on public memory and perception. Especially as these museums are taking the chance away from marginalized groups to tell their own stories and histories. Autry (2013) expresses an interesting argument in relation to this, detailing how, when museums selectively choose what will be remembered and what will be forgotten, they can participate in

the concept of politicizing memory. This politicization of memory, Autry explains, is terminology exploring sociological frameworks in relation to identity driven museums as "...social activism, institutionalization, political change, and economic development impinge on cultural processes. This complements research about the uses of public history in culture-led urban development, particularly in postindustrial cities." (2013, 62). This facet of museology is relevant to my study in reference to social movements, such as the Black Lives Matter movement in 2016 and 2020, where movements such as these inspire companies and institutions to express their support as allies to the movement's desire to further equality. However, while Autry (2013) describes identity-driven museums along with how influential societal culture is when shaping public history, it is important to remember again that the history of museums was built using a structurally racist framework. This framework was culturally a non-issue until the early 21st Century, as the culture in today's society has shifted to encourage equality. Therefore, as society changes, museums must also adapt their displays of public history to their evolved audience. It can be problematic that many museums have publicly claimed to support the Black Lives Matter movement in particular but have not implemented any tangible changes in their institutions when representing BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Colour) groups.

2.3.4 Who Should Get to Tell the Story?

Wallace (2011) addresses this tension in the modern-day ethical struggle over how one should construct the past. Like Autry (2013), Wallace (2011) describes the politics of memory, describing how the 'ethics of memory' are embedded with the 'politics of memory.' When tackling the construction of public memory, Wallace (2011, 6) explains "It is this dynamic interplay between victims and perpetrators and their descendants, and the stories that get told

about the past—what to remember, how to remember, how much prominence to give to the remembering, etc." Therefore, in direct relation to my study, the question becomes to what degree should one be able to intercede in order to support contemporary issues that require historical justice? Should natural history museums even have sections for Indigenous history, or should Indigenous groups simply have their own cultural museums where they can share their own stories and traumas? Examining how cultural institutions contribute to the societal memory and struggle over meanings that are to be derived from the past, we must understand the important role that museums play in bringing about societal change.

The research of both Lynch and Alberti (2010) and Fischer et al. (2017) offer insight to my research by demonstrating how to address the issue of misrepresenting the Mi'kmaq in Natural History Museums regardless of the curators' intentions. By revealing the problematic features presented in natural history museums, the issues of misrepresentation within their narratives would be vastly improved. Utilizing museums as progressive educational institutions that represent feminist histories, demonstrations of a more egalitarian society, as well as the cultures of Indigenous, Black, and colored persons, museum education could then potentially lead to the positive outcome of future generations quickly embracing equality. However, there may be some unanticipated difficulties when attempting to remedy a structurally historical wrong. Lynch and Alberti (2010) discuss this particular issue with a focus on the Manchester Museum in the UK. While museums may address racism publicly with positive intentions, Lynch and Alberti (2010) believe that museums may inevitably fail to achieve their goal and escape their connection to their legacy of prejudice and colonialism. This is because when curating and displaying a portrayal of history, it is important to ask who should have the platform to tell certain stories? When analyzing Western European museums, we must consider the

following questions: do Western or European museums or natural history museums as an institution have the right to tell the stories of others? Should they include other cultural groups as a form of equality and inclusion, or should they only discuss their own history as only they have the right to detail it?

In response to these questions, Blustein (2008) argues that the descendants of marginalized groups and victims of injustice should be "...entitled to have [their] own understanding of the past validated by society and properly reflected in the historical record. If social justice partly concerns the degree to which a society establishes and supports the institutional conditions necessary for the recognition of collective identities, then institutionalized public remembrance of past injustice is owed to the descendants as a matter of social justice." (Blustein, 2008, 164). In relation to my study, this is an incredibly important passage, as Blustein seamlessly argues that victims of racial injustice and their descendants of inequality should be in charge of telling their own story.

2.4. Spatial Narrative

In order to properly define spatial narrative, we need to first understand the difference between 'narrating space' and 'spatializing narrative,' the latter of which is more relevant to my study. To narrate space, Ryan et al. (2016) explains, is to add a spatial context to narrative theory or to understand what role space plays in literary narrative. Neuhaus (2015, 45) describes spatial narrative similarly to Ryan, Azaryahu, and Foote, defining it as the "sequencing of movement and action" within a story. These types of narratives can be found in fictional storytelling and are created in order to transport the reader or viewer, if in film or video games, to the fictional universe being described. This can be shown in the stylistically descriptive writing of F. Scott

Fitzgerald in *The Great Gatsby*, or other literature that include maps at the forefront of the novel such as *Gulliver's Travels* by Johnathon Swift to guide readers through the fictional universe (Ryan et al. 2016). Similarly, Ryan et al. (2016) discusses how an individual can draw their own map whilst reading a story or playing a video game in order to follow along with a space that was not explicitly shown or heavily described. And, in further relation to Ryan et al.'s (2016) approach to digital spatial narrative, Neuhaus (2015) also discusses how the individual's spatial narrative can be shaped through past and present experiences through online interactions.

'Spatial narrative is a broad concept that describes the relationship between narrative storytelling and the physical space in which the story is being told or shown (Ryan et al. 2016). By analyzing our daily routines, the world around us would represent a type of spatial narrative within our lives. This can be seen through the details we overlook everyday such as street signs, the majority of which are named after historically-important individuals. Spatial narrative units such as these show us who was considered to be an important person in history worth commemorating. Neuhaus (2015) added to this point by suggesting that, on an individual level, one's identity is created through their experience with the urban narrative of where they are situated, using the individual's information intake from their past and present experiences to shape this narrative. As street signs reveal, those in power can shape the way certain histories are portrayed and remembered in the urban landscape, which directly correlates to museums and how they choose to discuss and represent different groups through the spatial arrangement of their exhibition spaces. Azaryahu and Foote's work on public memory (2007, 2008) is especially important to this discussion. In their work they argue that no matter in what form the past is physically being constructed, materially through art, public spaces, or media, the politics of commemoration expose the "social tensions, political realities, and cultural values" (Foote and

Azaryahu, 2007, 126).

2.4.2 How do Museums Create Spatial Narratives?

Museums are used as an instrument to spatially display a linear chronological sequence, using artifacts, audio-visual aids, and various text or signage as a narrative media (Ryan et al. 2016). When creating and designing museum narratives, the architectural space is incredibly important. Ryan et al. (2016) describes how the assemblage of spaces that visitors are meant to interact with must be well thought out. The museum paths that link exhibits within the exhibition space together must act as the metaphorical thread sewing a collection of prominent histories together to create an overall narrative for visitors to digest.

Overall, the spatial narratives in museums are constructed from a multitude of angles, from the very architecture of the building, to exhibition layout, signage, tour guides, and overall presentation. Choi (1999) analyses the morphology of museum spaces and architecture and notes that the way spatial narratives are created in a museum is incredibly important when attempting to portray the intended message visitors are to learn and take away from the experience. Additionally, Ryan et al. (2016) discussed how the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford, England created their spatial narrative by quoting the museum website, “In most ethnographic and archaeological museums the displays are arranged according to geographical or cultural areas. Here they are arranged by type; musical instruments, weapons, masks, textiles, jewelry, and tools are all displayed in groups to show how the same problems have been solved at different times by different peoples.” (Pitt Rivers Museum, 2013, as cited in Ryan et al. 2016, p. 186) This technique is interesting, as the exhibits do not have to be directly interrelated but can be connected on solely a historical level. So, while each section is broken up into smaller exhibits,

the collective narrative can be recognized as a whole. Additionally, some museums simply have exhibitions with an implied chronological sequence, where there is no one intended route required to assess the narrative displayed. The Israel Defense Forces History Museum in Tel Aviv, Israel is an example of a museum where there is no specific route to follow (Ryan et al. 2016). This type of museum exhibits Israel's military history but is not designed to create a discernible storyline. Therefore, one does not always require a structured spatial narrative as the overall message can still be understood by visitors.

2.4.3 Museum Architecture Controlling Visitor Movement and Experience

While many museum buildings are architecturally planned prior to their construction, some buildings had been created for other purposes before being later transformed into museums. Using an existing structure offers a few limitations when curators cannot freely plan an imagined spatial narrative within an exhibit space. However, there are positives to utilizing existing structures, as museums can be created out of historical or memorial sites where the landscape doesn't require alteration in order to communicate the narrative.

Wineman and Peponis (2010) discuss the construction of museums similarly to Ryan et al. (2016), particularly how they can be designed to control and guide visitor movement and interaction. To explain how this is accomplished, Wineman and Peponis (2010) first define three categories of movement within a museum: spatially random movement, spatially dictated movement, and spatially guided movement. When one can freely choose their own path, it is called exploratory movement or spatially random movement. Conversely, there is a spatially dictated movement, when one must take a particular path that is restrictive to other options aside from that path. Lastly, there is spatially guided movement, which presents visitors with multiple

path choices but predicts that certain spaces or exhibits will be visited more regularly (Wineman and Peponis, 2010). Similarly, Choi (1999) states that, regardless of the layout of the space, there are two methods for controlling visitor movement: the deterministic model and the probabilistic model (Choi, 1999). These methods are similar to the second and third types of movement discussed by Wineman and Peponis (2010), as the deterministic model forces visitors to experience limited routes which divert from the intended path while the probabilistic model utilizes the statistics of visitor encounter and exploration within the syntactic layout. The probabilistic model is described to be the same preferred spatially guided method of movement discussed by Wineman and Peponis (2010) as it is described as movement not being forced or random. However, in relation to this third method of movement, Wineman and Peponis (2010) discuss a concept called space syntax analysis. Spatial syntax seeks to explore the layout of spaces and how they "are related to other spaces within a larger system" (p. 88). Therefore, spatial syntax is a technique which can be used to analyse the spatial layout in museums as well as the patterns of visitor activity within the building. Wineman and Peponis (2010) argue that museums should use the spatially guided movement when creating paths to not be unstructured but also not restrict visitors. The spatial syntax analysis of visitor spatially guided movements can help discover the spatial configuration of museums and how the pieces affect the whole when creating a narrative. Spatial syntax can then, as set of theories, help us to link museum space(s) to society by addressing visitor movement within museums to examine how visitor movements adapt or develop as well as how they form the lasting impacts from the exhibits. Choi (1999), also discusses spatial syntax similarly to Wineman and Peponis (2010), explaining that the primary focus for researching the effects on visitors exploring museum spaces are whether or not visitors "...point of view of exposure to the objects on display and receptiveness

to the message of exhibitions" (p. 241) changes based on the choice of structured vs unstructured paths.

Due to shifts in museum architecture, Ryan et al. (2016) discuss how history museums are narrative environments must be newly commissioned buildings and have to be explicitly designed to correspond to the story told by and within the museum. In reference to this, Ryan et al. (2016) quote architect István Mányi on his interpretation and analysis of the relationship between the permanent exhibition and the architecture of the building for the Holocaust Memorial Center in Budapest, Hungary: "The design of the permanent exhibition was not our task, but we have created its mental and physical frame because, without it, the whole building can't be interpreted" (Holocaust Memorial Centre, 2013, as cited in Ryan et al., 2016, pp.197-198). Ryan et al. (2016) add that one can craft an atmosphere and effectively manipulate the experience of visitors. Similarly, we can observe the U.S Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC where because architects had overcome the challenge of creating contemporary museum architecture while also appropriately expressing the Holocaust. As such, architect James Ingo Freed felt that it was important to create something that elicited a visceral response from visitors rather than a look like "... a box of artifacts" (Ryan et al., 2016, p.198). To accomplish this, James Ingo Freed had implemented historical features alluding to the Holocaust including raw materials such as brick, glass, and steel, to show the industrial materials of the age. He also included bridges, corridors, and towers in the upper floors of the permanent exhibition to display key architectural features of the Warsaw ghetto and of concentration camps. In doing this, the exhibition had provoked the feeling of insecurity and danger when walking over the floating glass bridges. Edward Linenthal, an academic who specializes in Religious and American

studies, said “Freed’s building, from its outward appearance and its interior mood and insistence on certain ways visitors inhabit and move through space, is designed as a space of disorientation.” (Ryan et al., 2016, p. 199).

These examples clearly show that the architecture of the building does, in fact, aid in the creation of spatial narrative. Spatial narratives at the Museum of Natural History are central to my research methods. Through analysing the architecture of the area in which the Mi’kmaw exhibits appear in the Museum of Natural History I will decipher the presented spatial narrative along with how it correlates with the misrepresentation of the Mi’kmaq in natural history museums.

Chapter 3

Methods

3.1 Introduction

The primary methods used in this study were centered around qualitative research. The following description of the research process will include an overview the study area and its history, the observations made during on-site visits to the museum, and the interviews conducted which will be analyzed by theme and the language used. To conclude this chapter there will be a brief summary of the limitations that were faced during the process of data collection for this study and how these limitations impacted the study results.

Recall that my primary research questions are as follows: How were the exhibits arranged to offer a spatial narrative of Mi'kmaw culture and heritage? How does the spatial narrative of these exhibits represent the Mi'kmaq? How did these particular narratives come to be? What is the message they are trying to communicate? Does the museum show both the past as well as the present contemporary content or voices of the Mi'kmaq? How has the representation of the Mi'kmaq evolved over time at the Museum of Natural History?

3.2 Reflexivity Statement

As a mixed-race person of colour, I understand the way in which misrepresentation and microaggressions can affect individuals and groups in the long term. While I am not Mi'kmaw, I am using my ability to identify microaggressive narratives presented within the Museum of Natural History's Mi'kmaw focused exhibits. Therefore, from this research I hope to illuminate these problematic spatial narratives to others who may not perceive or be aware of an issue. It is my hope that, through this thesis, to spark higher levels of communication and increase

awareness by bringing cognizance to the museum system about these problems. My background and personal experiences with racism and microaggressions have come to shape my commitment to issues of identity, cultural representation and social justice.

3.3 Study Area

The Nova Scotia Museum was created through the work of two citizens' groups, the Mechanics Institute in Halifax, founded in 1831, and later the Nova Scotian Institute of Science, founded in1862 (Our Museums, 2020). Today's Nova Scotia Museum network was called the Provincial Museum and was established in 1868 as a singular location in the building for what is today the Faculty of Architecture and Planning for Dalhousie University on Spring Garden Road (Our Museums, 2020). In 1947, the Provincial Museum had changed its name to the Nova Scotia Museum of Science and moved to its current location on 1747 Summer Street in 1970 (Our Museums, 2020. Figure 3.1). By 1993, the museum had become today's Museum of Natural History while remaining the official headquarters for the Nova Scotia Museum (Our Museums, 2020. Figure 3.2).

Currently, the Nova Scotia Museum is broken up into what is collectively 28 provincial museums and interpretive centers throughout Nova Scotia. These 28 museums are divided amongst Nova Scotia's seven tourism regions: the Halifax Metro, South Shore, Eastern Shore, Northumberland Shore, Yarmouth & Acadian Shores, Cape Breton Island, and the Fundy Shore & Annapolis Valley (Our Museums, 2020). My research and data collection focused on the Museum of Natural History within the Halifax Metro tourism region. While supplementary contextual data was gathered concerning the other museums in the province through my interviews, data was not physically collected from these locations.

Figure 3.1. Location of the Museum of Natural History

Map Data ©2021 Google

Figure 3.2. Physical Exterior of the Museum of Natural History

Author: Shae-Lynn Saulnier

Figure 3.3. Physical Exterior of the Museum of Natural History Indicating Length of Building Where Mi'kmaw-Focused Exhibits are Located

Author: Shae-Lynn Saulnier

3.4 Data Collection Methods

Some of the data for this study was collected through four physical visits during the summer of 2020 to the Museum of Natural History. During these visits the only area of the museum studied was the Mi'kmaw-focused exhibition space near the entrance of the museum, which includes the following exhibits: "This Is What I Wish You Knew", "Siawa'sik", and "Netukulimk".

During my physical visits to the museum, I carried out my inspection by following a pre-determined path of the museum as I moved through the exhibit space during all of my visits to the museum due to the COVID19 rules in place. During these visits, the actions of other visitors

were observed and recorded through handwritten notes so that I could quickly describe their interactions with the Mi'kmaw exhibition space while observing without any direct interaction with the visitors.

The data I collected through my physical visits, my notes and photographs, were carefully analyzed in regard to the presented content as well as seeking general trends of observed visitor movement and interaction.

As a part of my direct analysis of the exhibition space, I took photographs of the exhibits and their artifacts, the signage, and any information displayed in the exhibit space. Over the course of four visits, I additionally took note of all the changes that had occurred in the exhibition space. These changes consisted primarily of the "This Is What I Wish You Knew" exhibit being finalized as the clay tiles had not yet been installed during my first visit. In addition, a tapestry had been hung at the beginning of the tiles and informational boards which had also been provided by the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre in Halifax.

Concerning my visitor observations, I had taken written notes in which I had examined the behaviour of the visitors and how they had interacted with the exhibition space as a whole. As a clarification, during these visits I only conducted no-contact observation, wherein I never engaged with any visitors so that I could witness their actions without influencing them in any way.

The way that I had observed visitors was by asking for permission from the visitor's desk to sit in the far corner near the Naturalist lab on a bench that had already been placed there. From this, I managed to abide by COVID19 rules as the bench was more than 6 feet from the first boards of the "This Is What I Wish You Knew". While sitting from afar, I could take notes and

draw my personal map of the space while not drawing attention to myself. This way, I was able to avoid having to circle the museum multiple times to follow the predetermined path for COVID19 as visitors were discouraged from fully stopping for longer periods along the route of the museum.

The other data collected for my study was gathered outside of my physical visits to the museum through virtual interviews via the Zoom platform. This platform was decided upon due to the COVID19 pandemic and to allow for easy scheduling with each individual that had chosen to participate. To carry out this portion of my research, I was granted ethics approval from the Saint Mary's Research Ethics Board (SMU REB Registration Number: #20-123). All interviews I conducted consisted of upper-level staff of the Museum of Natural History as well as the Nova Scotia Museum network. Each individual had been invited to participate via email along with a virtual consent form that had informed them of their responses being recorded for further use in my study. From these interviews I had taken personal notes so that I could code for themes in each of the interview transcripts. These interviews took place over the course of an hour to an hour and a half each, with one interview per person.

3.5 Study Limitations

The study limitations faced during the entirety of this study predominantly consisted of those concerning the COVID19 pandemic. Due to closures for a lockdown in Nova Scotia and the safety of the public, the Museum of Natural History had been closed for several weeks. Therefore, there was less time to physically investigate the exhibit space. Once the museum had re-opened in early July of 2020, COVID19 had significantly changed the way that visitors were able to interact with the space and move around the exhibit.

Throughout the Museum of Natural History as a whole, there was a very specific route enforced through stickers on the floor and stanchion posts, which only allowed visitors to travel in one direction in order to reduce opportunities for visitors to interact with each other. As a result, visitors had to more through the museum at a much faster pace to keep the flow of movement steady and reduce visitor to visitor contact within 6 feet. Additionally, it is important to include that visitor movements could not be analysed in my study to investigate exploratory movement due to these COVID19 precautions. This is because there were arrows put in place to navigate visitors in the most direct route possible through the museum in order to minimize visitor to visitor contact. Therefore, the only analysis I conducted in the museum space pertained to the use of signage, language, and presentation of the exhibits in the space.

This affected my personal trips to the exhibit space, as I would have to loop the whole building so that I could re-visit areas I had to leave due to visitors being behind me. While I had intended to visit the museum more initially, due to the pandemic I was not able to visit as much as I had wanted to. In addition, only four visits to the museum were possible for me as I did not have access to a car and Halifax Transit had been undergoing frequent COVID19 updates about the rules of using public transit.

In the Mi'kmaq exhibit space specifically, certain items had been removed to reduce visitors touching and handling items. This included a feature of the "This Is What I Wish You Knew" Exhibit, in which there had been touch screens placed next to each of the boards lining the wall. By picking up headsets attached to the touchscreens, visitors would have been able to listen to additional information that had been recorded. These recordings contained personal stories shared first-hand from the Mi'kmaw individuals who helped curate the exhibit.

Another facet of the COVID19 limitations was that all of the interviews had to be conducted virtually via Zoom. This had resulted in some minor technical challenges such as Wi-Fi availability and connection issues, but these challenges ultimately did not hinder my ability to successfully conduct my interviews. The online format had also occasionally inhibited my ability to gauge the physical reactions of those interviewed when asked certain questions, as one of the individuals interviewed did not have a camera. I was also unable to interview certain individuals due to time constraints and difficulties in contacting certain groups such as other high-level staff members at the Museum of Natural History and the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre.

However, I was still able to effectively carry out my study without these extra interviews. While these limitations presented challenges, I was able to work around them and create alternate solutions so that I could produce significant and credible results which will be presented in the next chapter.

Chapter 4

Results and Discussion

4.1 Field Observations at the Museum of Natural History

In this section I will go over my analysis of the Mi'kmaw-focused exhibits in the Natural History Museum by utilizing the notes I had taken during my physical visits to the site. To contextualize the museum space as a whole along with the area I am studying in particular, I have included two maps of the Natural History Museum: the official map of the Museum of Natural History (Figure 4.1) and my own drawing of the overall exhibit space about which I will be conducting my analysis (Figure 4.2). This exhibit space contains the three main Mi'kmaw-focused exhibits I observed: "This Is What I Wish You Knew," "Siawa'sik," and "Netukulimk."

These figures are important to my study so that I can properly display the way the exhibition space fits into the overall museum architecture, which adds to the intended or unintended spatial narrative(s) of these exhibits.

Figure 4.1. Official Map of the Museum of Natural History
Museum of Natural History Visitor Map

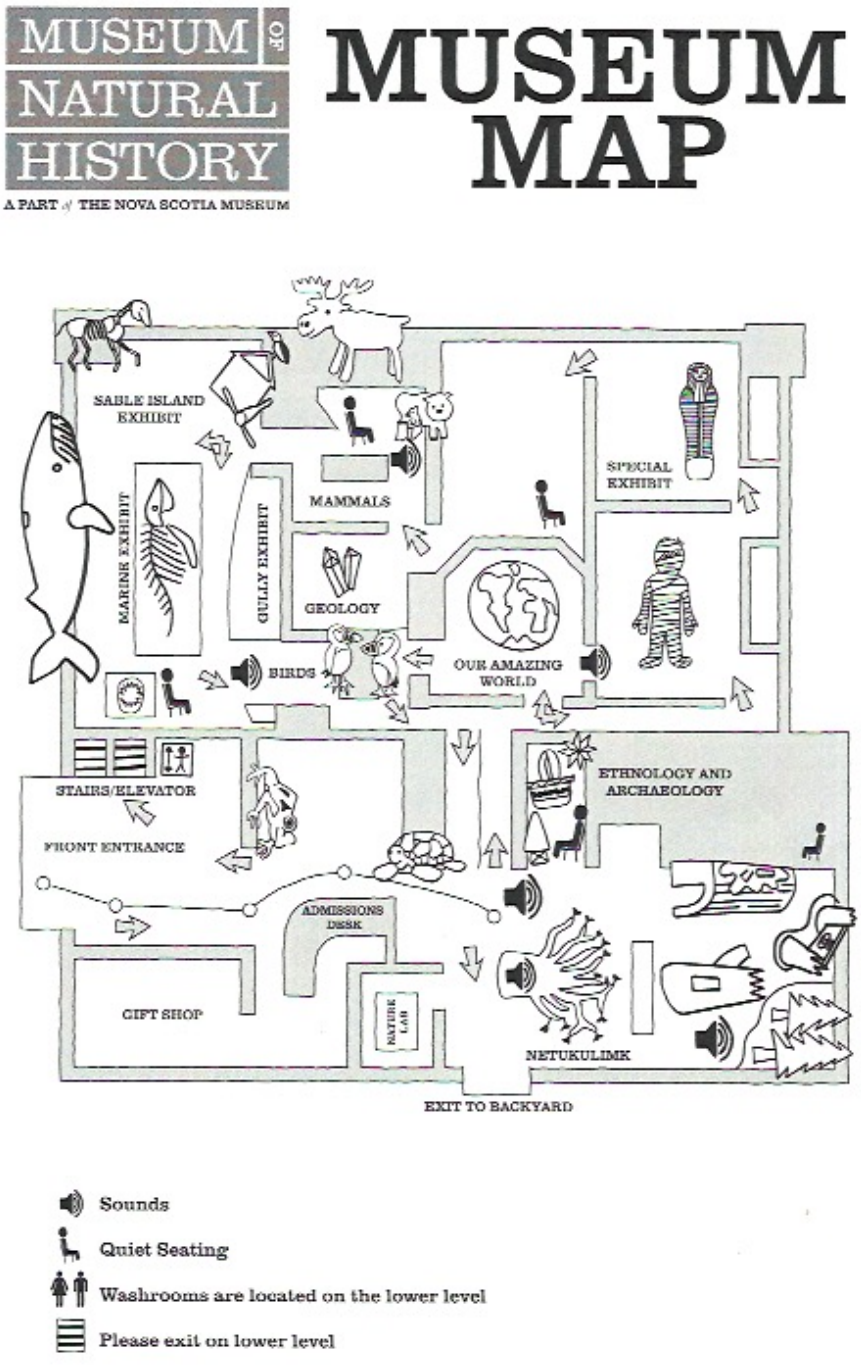
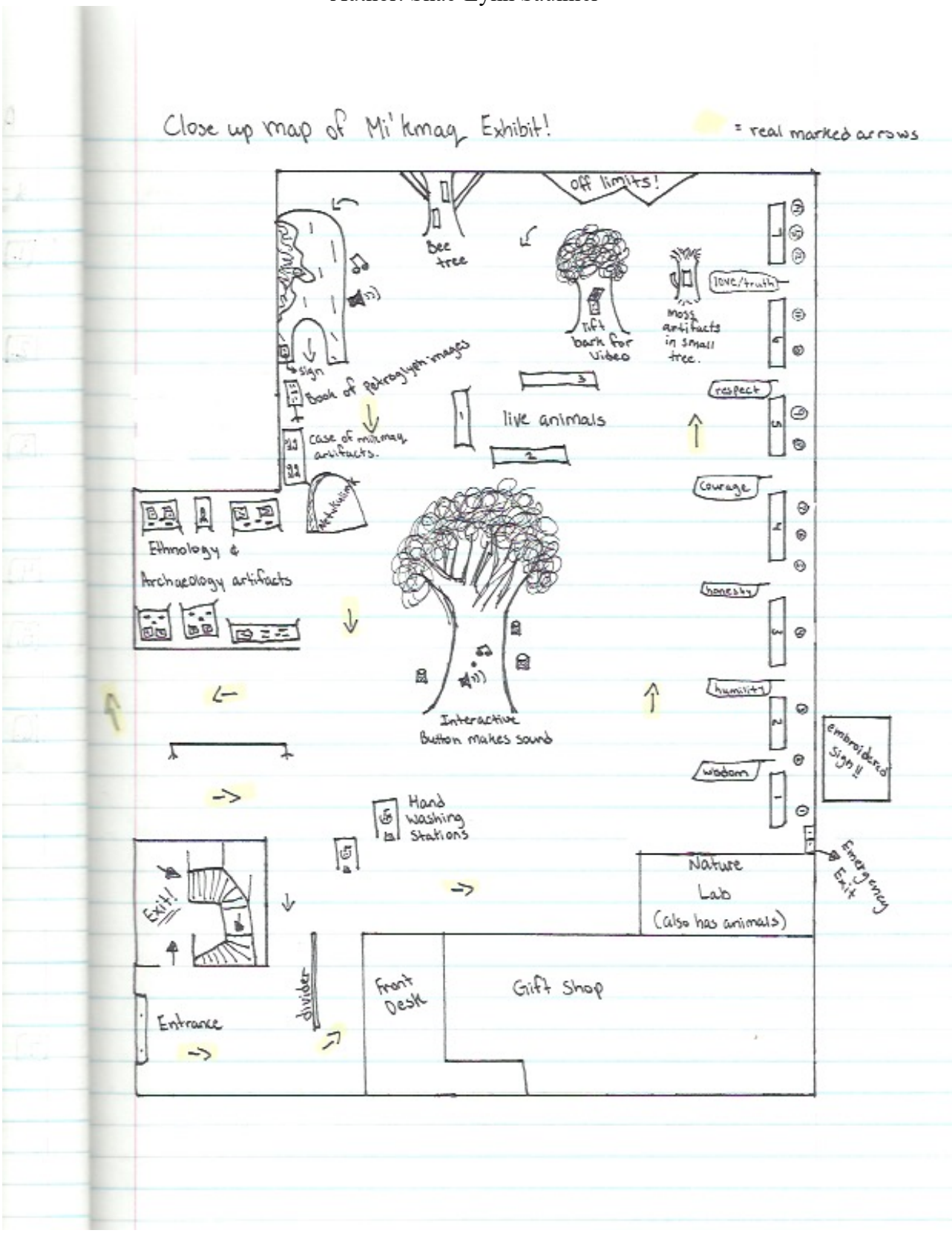


Figure 4.2. My Hand Drawn Map of the Studied Exhibit Space
Author: Shae-Lynn Saulnier



From just the space alone, the spatial narrative of the museum's Mi'kmaw-focused exhibits gives visitors the impression that the subject matter of Indigenous history in Canada can be adequately displayed in a space that is approximately 66 x 40 (2640 square feet). In reference to the aforementioned article in the Introduction of my study (section 1.1, p.1) published in Global News, Halifax's Museum of Natural History displays a perfect example for how museums and natural history museums tend to display Mi'kmaw history and culture in exhibits by "nations and cultures into small exhibits, tucked away in a corner somewhere." (McSheffrey, 2020). From this, at first sight I was disappointed to see that the "This Is What I Wish You Knew" Exhibit was the only exhibit to include any text for visitors to read and engage with to learn about the history of the Mi'kmaq in Canada (Figures 4.3 and 4.4).

Figures 4.3. and 4.4. "This Is What I Wish You Knew" Exhibit and the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre Tapestry
Author: Shae-Lynn Saulnier

The first exhibit visitors see upon entering the museum is the “This Is What I Wish You Knew” exhibit, a temporary exhibit created in collaboration with the Mi’kmaw Native Friendship Centre in Halifax. This exhibit is displayed with seven boards that run along the wall. These boards include a briefly written history of the Mi’kmaw peoples in Nova Scotia as well as the broader Canadian context towards the end of the boards. Above the boards are fourteen clay tiles that have been installed to better tell the stories of Mi’kmaw experiences in Nova Scotia and Canada (Figures 4.5 and 4.6). These clay tiles are the centrepiece of the exhibit, delving into personal stories exploring Indigenous self-identity which were produced by the fifty urban community members who had taken part in the project.

Figures 4.5. and 4.6. Framed Clay Tile Art from the Exhibit “This Is What I Wish You Knew”
Author: Shae-Lynn Saulnier

The museum of natural history's website specifies that the project was built in consideration of "the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of 2015, which documented the history and legacy of Canada's Residential School System" (https://naturalhistory.novascotia.ca/what-see-do/what-i-wish-you-knew). The message of this exhibit was to empathetically reveal the themes of "the diversity, strength and courage of our Indigenous population in the Halifax region" (https://naturalhistory.novascotia.ca/what-see-do/what-i-wish-you-knew). Under non-COVID19 circumstances, these tiles are each paired with an auditory experience in which visitors can listen to the artists of these tiles describe how the tiles show their life journeys thus far with iPad tablets and headphones, however these had been removed due to COVID19 to reduce high-touch surfaces.

In regard to my analysis of the presented information and signage, while minimal, I found to be well researched and presented in a neutral viewpoint. It appeared that the Mi'kmaw-focused exhibits in the Museum of Natural History had the aim to include the Mi'kmaq into Nova Scotian history while recognizing the various wrongdoings the government had perpetrated to them. However, while these boards were created in collaboration with the local Indigenous community, the amount of information on the boards seems rather limited and surface level. In particular, due to the removal of the headphones, the visitor experience then lacks the intended narrative meant to be included within the exhibit. Through my interviews, I had learnt that there are actually many more boards included in this exhibit. The other tiles are currently being held at the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre; therefore, you would need to seek them out personally to fully perceive the full story the exhibit is meant to tell. As this exhibit is temporary, the tiles will eventually be returned to the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre upon request.

The boards in the "This Is What I Wish You Knew" exhibit had been set up to be progressively moving through time. As visitors move down the row of boards and tiles through the exhibit, they will be met with information surrounding key interactions between Indigenous persons and early Canada including the Canadian government. These significant interactions consisted of: the arrival of French and British colonizers to what is now Canada, the Gradual Enfranchisement Act of 1869, the Indian Act of 1876, the creation of the Department of Indian Affairs in 1880, the introduction of residential schools in 1830's and their closure in 1996, the 1985 amendment to the Indian Act (known as Bill C-31, allowing Indigenous women to reclaim their Indian status after years of having it removed following marriage to a non-status/non-Indigenous man), and lastly these boards included a short excerpt about 'Treaty Day' and Nova Scotia's Mi'kmaq History Month in October.

In my analysis of the language used on the "This Is What I Wish You Knew" exhibit boards, I found it interesting that outdated terms such as 'Indian' had been used. In reference to discussing the Indian Act, this was consciously included to educate visitors by allowing them to read about the frame in which the Mi'kmaq and other Indigenous peoples in Canada had been historically viewed. I later discovered during the process of my interviews that one of the museum staff, Roger Lewis, who is a member of the Mi'kmaw community, had been the one to write what is displayed on the boards. It was also confirmed that the outdated words were used to represent the social contexts of the time periods on the boards. As such, a large percentage of the language used had been chosen rather well so as to display the painful history of the Mi'kmaq in Nova Scotia and Canada.

Figure 4.7. and 4.8. "Siawa'sik" NSCAD Student Curated Exhibit
Author: Shae-Lynn Saulnier

The next exhibit visitors come across it the "Siawa'sik" exhibit. "Siawa'sik" is an exhibit that had been curated by students from the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (NSCAD) as part of their Indigenous Exhibition Methodologies class (Figure 4.7 and 4.8). The students in the class "...were tasked with researching Indigenous material culture in the collection of the Nova Scotia Museum." (https://naturalhistory.novascotia.ca/what-see-do/siawasik). The purpose of this exhibit was to challenge the narrative of 'The Vanishing Indian' and instead show visitors how the culture and communities of the Mi'kmaw people were irrepressible and are still thriving today. This exhibit is presented as a glass wardrobe, entitled a 'Piers Case,' which contains Mi'kmaw artifacts or cultural items, including clothing, beaded purses, and wooden flowers. This exhibit exposes how the objects on display are "examples of souvenir art, in which

materials and decorations have been skillfully adapted to meet the demands of the new European market. Rather than a loss of "authenticity", these changes represent survival, a continuation of Mi'kmaw culture despite colonial pressures to assimilate". Lastly, this exhibition space contains a small exhibit inclusion of a petroglyph image book, which contains a rather large collection of petroglyphs by ancestral Mi'kmaw (Figures 4.9 and 4.10).

Figures 4.9. and 4.10.
Petroglyph Image Book Placed Next to "Siawa'sik" Exhibit
Author: Shae-Lynn Saulnier

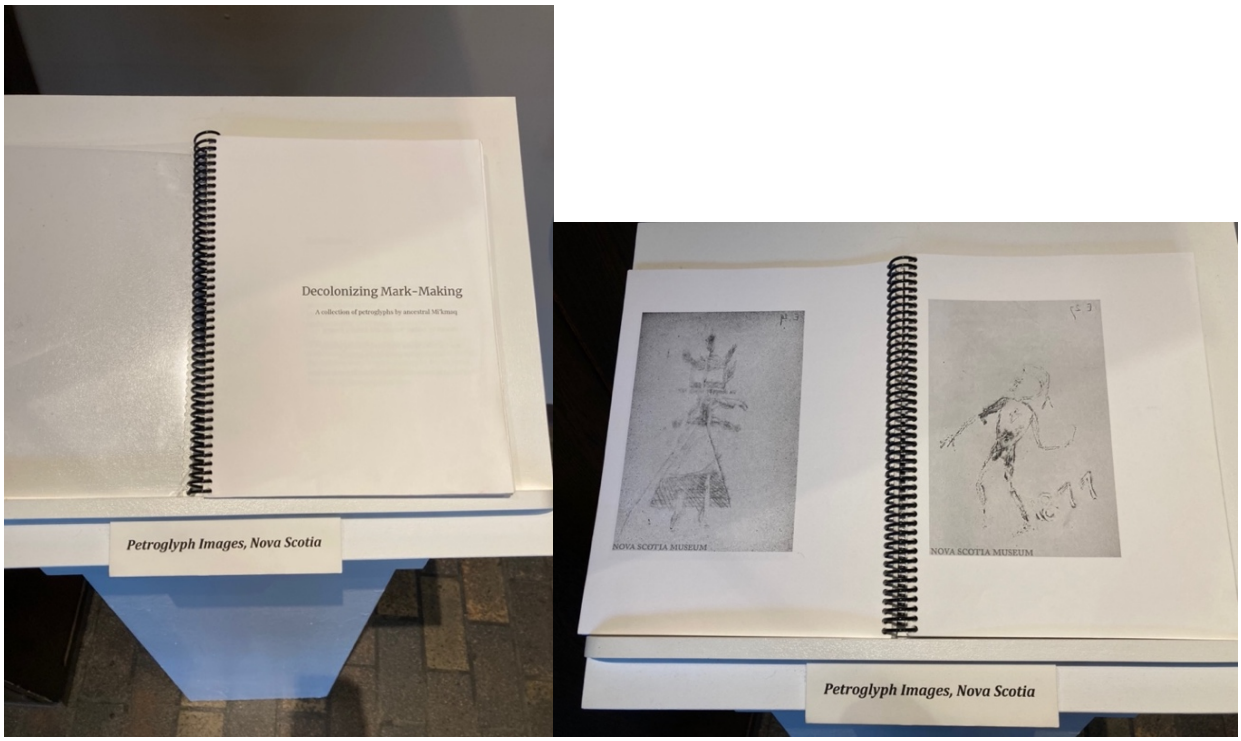


Figure 4.11. Netukulimk Exhibit
Author: Shae-Lynn Saulnier

The third exhibit entitled “Netukulimk” (Figure 4.11) is a permanent exhibit that had been installed in 2011 and is located in the centre of this overall exhibition space. This exhibit was created to celebrate Nova Scotian forests. This exhibit is not entirely Mi’kmaq focused though as it mainly is in connection with the live animals (Figures 4.12 and 4.13) in the Naturalist exhibit. The Museum of Natural History quotes, “Here you’ll find nocturnal creatures

and plants, hear the sounds of a woodpecker and a porcupine and see live snakes, a colony of bees create honey, frogs, salamanders and insects that are all native to Nova Scotia" (https://naturalhistory.novascotia.ca/what-see-do/permanent-exhibits/netukulimk) while also detailing its multi-sensory experience with buttons on the tree that make sounds consisting of bird calls and the sounds of other native creatures.

This exhibit in particular feels easy to forget as a Mi'kmaw-focused exhibit as it truly has nothing to do with educating visitors about Mi'kmaw history and culture, and rather serves more purpose to the Naturalist exhibits.

Figures 4.12. and 4.13. Naturalist Exhibit Live Animals
Author: Shae-Lynn Saulnier

The reason this exhibit is considered one of the Mi'kmaw-focused exhibits, however, is simply because of its name, "This permanent exhibit got its name, Netukulimk, from a traditional Mi'kmaq concept that celebrates the connection and balance between the natural and human worlds" (https://naturalhistory.novascotia.ca/what-see-do/permanent-exhibits/netukulimk).

Figures 4.14. and 4.15.
Visitor Interaction with the Live Animal Tanks in the Naturalist Exhibit
Author: Shae-Lynn Saulnier

During my observations, it was abundantly clear and noticeable that well over three quarters of the visitors had completely by-passed the "This is What I Wish You Knew" exhibit by glancing at the first board momentarily before moving on to other sections of the space. The main factor distracting visitors from the Mi'kmaq focus was the integration of the Naturalist exhibits in the center of the space (Figures 4.14. and 4.15.).

By integrating this exhibit with the Mi'kmaw-focused exhibits, the spatial narrative changes. This choice upholds problematic associations common to natural history museums where Indigenous peoples are viewed as 'primitive' or 'wild' in comparison to the 'modern' Europeans. Moreover, by including a Naturalist exhibit in the middle of several Indigenous-focused ones, this presentation equates the Indigenous and Mi'kmaq with nature, as if they are

synonymous rather than being a separate entity. Although, there have been critiques of the Western world and the conceptual separation of humans and nature, only the Indigenous are depicted in natural history museums while Westerners do not integrate themselves into that space. And, with the way the environment is can be viewed in today's society, it is a popular viewpoint to place higher value towards humans than the Earth when discussing environmental issues. This, then also places Mi'kmaq and the Indigenous on that lower level, allowing racist interpretations to fester even if completely unintended. It is spatial decisions like these that allow misrepresentation and problematic spatial narratives to exist.

By including Indigenous exhibits in a natural history museum, the association with them as a people being extinct or relatively pre-modern arises. I find this particularly relevant, as Indigenous persons are one of the only ethnic groups to be placed in Natural History Museums, whereas European and North American groups have their own museums and whole buildings to not only display their history but also their progress and development up to the present to show visitors a complete history. While space may be a constraint in this particular museum, it is still problematic to place an ethnic group such as the Indigenous with extinct relics and artifacts of our province's past, such as live and stuffed animals. This is because when a marginalized group of people is placed next to animals and stuffed extinct fauna in a natural history museum, they can come to be viewed as akin to these extinct creatures in the form of a micro-aggression within the narrative.

The spatial narrative also changes through the integration of the Naturalist exhibit by creating an incredibly interactive distraction for visitors (Figure 3.3 and 3.4). As museums are today more interactive and less focused on static artifacts, many visitors entering this space naturally gravitate towards the live animals. By taking the focus away, the live animals position

the Mi'kmaw-focused exhibits as being less important and less interesting in comparison. If, instead the Mi'kmaw-focused exhibits had this space to themselves, the narrative would allow visitors to focus more on the stories and histories presented on the boards of the This Is What I Wish You Knew" exhibit. But, because the focus is taken away, the attempt to educate the public about Mi'kmaw culture and history ultimately fails.

Lastly, in reference to the petroglyph exhibit located next to the "Siawa'sik" exhibit (Figures 4.8, 4.9, and 4.10.), the book of petroglyphs contained well over a hundred scans of markings and images created by Mi'kmaq persons. However, there were no explanations or written information to educate the visitors when interacting with the book. This lack of information and explanation of the images can potentially communicate negative narratives to visitors. For example, a possible negative narrative that this exhibit could create is that the information was not important enough to include to educate visitors and, therefore, not worth knowing. This message can further reinforce the narrative that Mi'kmaw culture and history is not as important as European history, which is commonly explicitly detailed in its museum presentation such as the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Hall in the American Museum of Natural History in New York.

4.2 Analysis of the Interviews with Senior Museum Officials

Following my physical visits to the Museum of Natural History, I conducted several interviews with upper-level staff of the Nova Scotia Museum. Those interviewed were two individuals who work in the Museum of Natural History and one individual who works in the

overall Nova Scotia Museum system. For the purpose of this study, the participants names will be omitted and therefore referred to as: Senior Museum Official #1, #2, and #3.

The common questions that had overlapped into each of the interviews consisted of the following: Can you tell me about the current Mi'kmaw-focused exhibits at the Museum of Natural History? Have these exhibits been updated or changed since their installation? How often are the museum exhibits updated or changed? Does the museum plan to keep these exhibits permanently? What do you believe is the story that the Mi'kmaw-focused exhibits are trying to tell visitors? During the creation of the Mi'kmaw-focused exhibits was there much input is from Mi'kmaw communities in Nova Scotia? Does/Did the museum have regular meetings with the Mi'kmaw communities so they can actively collaborate on the museum exhibits together? Does the museum keep contact with these communities after the exhibits are created to regularly have new perspectives brought to the museum's attention concerning what can be updated, changed, or expanded upon?

My personal perception of the interviews and the answers that I received gave the overall impression that the Museum of Natural History and the greater Nova Scotia Museum do care about proper representation of the Mi'kmaq. In my first interview with Senior Museum Official #1, I discovered that all artifacts in the Nova Scotia Museum systems history have been given to the museum as gifts or donations. From this, in comparison to other popular natural history museums such as the American Museum of Natural History the Nova Scotia museum system has been adamant to not possess or display any stolen items from any peoples in Nova Scotia's history. While this includes all museums in the Nova Scotia Museum system, this particular information is relevant to the culturally based museums such as: The Black Loyalist Heritage

Centre in Shelburne NS, the Highland Village Museum / Baile nan Gàidheal in Cape Breton NS, the Acadian Village of Nova Scotia / Le Village Historique Acadien de la Nouvelle-Écosse in Pubnico NS, and the Museum of Natural History with Mi'kmaw artifacts and culturally significant objects.

In my interviews with Senior Museum Official #2 and Senior Museum Official #3 I was able to analyse Halifax's Museum of Natural History more specifically rather than the whole network of Nova Scotia museums. Through these two particular interviews I was able to address the following questions: What is the message of the Museum of Natural History? What is the overall message of the Mi'kmaw-focused exhibits? Are Mi'kmaq and Indigenous peoples misrepresented in natural history contexts? What could be better? Should the Mi'kmaq have their own museum to tell their story?

From these questions I was able to gather that the current location for the Museum of Natural history was actually built from scratch to architecturally fit the predesigned specs of the permanent galleries. In particular the 'Mammals' exhibit (Figure 4.1) was one of the exhibits that the current structure was built around. The Mi'kmaw-focused exhibits were not part of the original plans upon the building's construction, but rather came later. The overall intended message, according to Senior Museum Official #3 and Senior Museum Official #2, of the Museum of Natural History is to "tell the story of Nova Scotia's natural history through both live and preserved specimens, and how that history is intertwined with the cultural history of the people living within it, with a specific focus on the Mi'kmaq" (Senior Museum Official #2). Therefore, "the current permanent and temporary Mi'kmaw exhibits are intended to display culturally significant pieces and artifacts and offer the message that the Mi'kmaw communities

are still here and that they have always been here as the original inhabitants of Nova Scotia" (Senior Museum Official #3). The "This Is What I Wish You Knew" exhibit is especially powerful as a narrative because the urban experience of the Mi'kmaq presents different and more contemporary experiences and "difficulties not always experienced while living on a reserve" (Senior Museum Official #2). This narrative brings in a more urban side of the story which has not always had a platform. To quote Senior Museum Official #3, that this exhibit in particular is "trying to incorporate more modern storylines, as the story [one is usually shown] has been a little frozen in time." So, the exhibits are meant to present the message that "pre- and post-contact with Europeans there were and still are ripple effects of colonization being experienced today" (Senior Museum Official #3). Collectively the exhibits "This Is What I Wish You Knew", "Siawa'sik", and "Netukulimk" are meant to act as a sort of "catalyst to inspire visitors to dig deeper on their own" (Senior Museum Official #2) to educate themselves further about the history of the Mi'kmaq in Nova Scotia as well as their presence today.

Another intended message comes from the overall close proximity of the Mi'kmaw exhibition space to the Ethnology and Archaeology section (Figure 4.1). While the Ethnology and Archaeology section is not one of the Mi'kmaq exhibits it does contain some early tools of the Mi'kmaq. This section is meant to show visitors how these tools, used hundreds of years ago, were "rather advanced for the time" (Senior Museum Official #2) and shouldn't be considered primitive. However, when I asked both Senior Museum Official #3 and Senior Museum Official #2 about the reasoning behind integrating the Naturalist exhibit into the Mi'kmaw-focused exhibit space both had replied that this choice was made because of space issues in the building. The juxtaposition of these exhibits being placed together is not viewed as problematic by any of the senior staff I interviewed. However, all those interviewed agree that it would be very

interesting to have a more dedicated space for Mi'kmaw history and cultural representation, whether that be in its own space or entire museum.

When asked about the current problems with race and representation due to the structural inequalities of race in museums and academia, Senior Museum Official #2 said, "Museums are not a neutral space" and that they would want to see more inclusive stories being told so that museums can paint a more realistic picture of the past and present of Nova Scotia. Additionally, they would like to see more Mi'kmaq and African Nova Scotian voices in all of the Nova Scotia Museums sites. They expressed that there is definitely a need to tell these stories so that misconception and misguided perspectives can be more well informed. For example, they experienced a complaint about the "This Is What I Wish You Knew" exhibit and how it described residential schools in a negative way, as a visitor believed that "...some good had come out of it" in a positive manner. From this, Senior Museum Official #2 then explained that it should be Mi'kmaq and African Nova Scotians telling the stories and not the current white voices that have been telling histories that aren't their own. Potentially through this they discussed how the museum could expand virtually and use the panels as a starting point so one could choose to seek out information and access it to learn more and self-educate.

While discussing race and representation with Senior Museum Official #3, we discussed the importance of training museum staff. When asked if the Black Lives Matter movement had sparked any conversations in the Museum of Natural History to implement or to improve anything within the Mi'kmaw-focused exhibits content, Senior Museum Official #3 had said, "Museums are looking... to decolonize in whatever way possible." They continued to explain how the museum has been making strides in this direction by dismantling the older galleries, as they were old fashioned and utilized 'ancient' Mi'kmaw mannequins dressed in primitive

clothing from hundreds of years ago. In the scope of language, they explained how the way we use certain language is constantly evolving and, therefore, they will always be regularly updating. Viewing the difficulties of reviewing museums as an institution to improve impacts they may not intentionally produce; Senior Museum Official #3 sees as a welcome challenge and an opportunity for the system to do better and do more. “Museums are predominantly a White environment,” they said, outlining the White male dominance in our systems, and it will take time to change. But, because there is such a high volume of people now having these conversations, they believe it may happen more rapidly than before this round of the Black Lives Matter movement occurred. Especially, they detail, how the museum has even come to recently hold virtual conferences about intersectionality, diversity, and unconscious bias.

As a whole these virtual interviews were very relaxed, conversational dialogues, where I could definitely perceive the sincerity of each individual I had interviewed when discussing race, misrepresentation, unconscious bias, and diversity and intersectionality. Recognizing these interviews as highly productive conversations, Senior Museum Official #3 had even expressed to me how there is still a lot of learning that the museum community needs to do and how they themself has that desire to learn more.

Looking to the misrepresentation of the Mi’kmaq in natural history museums, Senior Museum Official #3 had also expressed the need for more contemporary viewpoints and histories because of the problematic history of framing Mi’kmaw people in solely a historical lens. As this historical lens paints misrepresentations of the Mi’kmaq as being a ‘primitive’ and ‘archaic’ people, they then stated, “Histories look different depending on whose history you’re reading, and who’s telling the narrative.” In response to this we then discussed how, when you are being

educated about the Mi'kmaq in only a historical lens it creates the mental association of picturing them in an ancient way rather than in a contemporary way today "...in 2020 wearing Nikes and going to Dalhousie University." This creates the us and them separation that further enforces the racial inequality.

For a shift in a more progressive direction, the currently planned future exhibits are meant to connect more with Mi'kmaw communities to discuss how the exhibits should look and be like. For the 'Netukulimk' exhibit referenced in Figure 4.1, the museum did contact and check in with communities about what could or should be updated, as it is an older installation. Furthermore, my interviews had also revealed how the staff would like to see a larger exhibit overall so that more of the Mi'kmaw story and history can be told to visitors than can be fit into the current space. This, along with more Mi'kmaw content throughout all of the galleries of the Museum of Natural History rather than having it feel more separated within one single space. For example, a new proposal to display more inclusion is that the Maritime museum of the Atlantic wants to include the Mi'kmaw perspective of the Halifax explosion. Moreover, in one of my interviews the subject of management surfaced. As there have been recent changes within the last year in the management of the Museum of Natural History and the Nova Scotia Museum, there is now a new manager and a new Nova Scotia Museum director as well as a new executive director. In these interviews, as they held a conversational format, the subject of whether including the Mi'kmaq in a natural history museum was appropriate given the colonial connotations did not arise.

In a similar vein, when asked if the Mi'kmaq should have their own museum or collaboratively share a museum with the Nova Scotia Museum network to tell their own stories, Senior Museum Official #2 had said that "it would be nice to promote a Mi'kmaw exhibit in the

Nova Scotia Museum system so that they could help to elevate their voices and stories", particularly as the Nova Scotia Museum has three culturally based sites dedicated to the other popular groups in Nova Scotian history including: The Black Loyalist Heritage Centre in Shelburne NS, the Highland Village Museum / Baile nan Gàidheal in Cape Breton NS, and the Acadian Village of Nova Scotia / Le Village Historique Acadien de la Nouvelle-Écosse in Pubnico NS.

However, in the end it they felt it would ultimately be best to allow the Mi'kmaw communities to decide themselves if they would want to, for example, have the new Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre be adopted into the Nova Scotia Museum system, as it is currently going to be rebuilt in a new location. Or, if it would be best to create a brand-new museum for the Mi'kmaq as their own separate entity that is community led and not a part of the Nova Scotia Museum system.

From my field observations and findings in these interviews, my standpoint is still in agreement with the Museum of Natural History misrepresenting the Mi'kmaq and the story should be told by the Mi'kmaq themselves. And, with the colonial backgrounds, natural history museums should not be telling or including the histories and stories of marginalized groups. As there is currently a desire to have museums be more inclusive spaces, I understand the views of those I have interviewed because there is not always enough space to completely explore a narrative and you must sometimes work with what you have available. However, while those I have interviewed are upper-level staff, I had been told during my interviews that the final decisions are not theirs to make as there are higher ranks of staff in the system that have more power and control over the shape that the Nova Scotia Museums take and the narratives they tell.

Chapter 5

Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Summary of Findings

The goal of my research was to answer the following questions in relation to the Natural History Museum: How were the exhibits arranged to offer a spatial narrative of Mi'kmaw culture and heritage? How does the spatial narrative of these exhibits represent the Mi'kmaq? How did these particular narratives come to be? What is the message they are trying to communicate? Does the museum show both the past as well as the present contemporary content or voices of the Mi'kmaq? How has the representation of the Mi'kmaq evolved over time at the Museum of Natural History?

While the Museum of Natural History endeavoured to include and represent the Mi'kmaq into the historical natural narrative of Nova Scotia, there are problems with this particular museum and their methods in doing so. Seeing as the Museum of Natural History is a 'natural' history museum, it would make sense and be more appropriate for the museum to simply communicated the history of Nova Scotia through animals, plants, fungi, ecosystems, geology, paleontology, climatology, etc. Including Mi'kmaw-focused exhibits feels outdated and cringey, particularly as this very inclusion perpetuates the problematic spatial narrative common to natural history museums where Indigenous peoples are associated with terms like 'primitive' or 'wild' in comparison to the 'modern' and 'advanced' Europeans. In particular, I believe it is wrong and upholds negative connotations to have the Netukulimk exhibit as it truly has nothing to offer about the history or culture of the Mi'kmaq in Nova Scotia.

This is particularly harmful as the main audience of this museum is young children, and in reference to my literature review (See Chapter 2 in my literature review in sections 2.2.2 and 2.2.3), key findings from my research are that spatial narratives can deeply affect and shape the individuals we become along with provoking generational bias. From this, I can confidently say that until Mi'kmaq can have full control to shape and display their own narratives to educate the public about their culture and history, misrepresentations will always occur as Westerners are not the correct curators. Especially where, while the museum had made an effort to reach out to local Mi'kmaw communities to create their current Mi'kmaw-focused exhibits, their efforts fall short by integrating the Naturalist exhibit into the same space.

During the process of my interviews, it was explained that the inclusion of the Naturalist exhibit to the Mi'kmaw exhibition area was due to limitations of available space. However, if there was not an appropriate space in the museum it may have been best to not include Mi'kmaw-focused exhibits at all, particularly because the lack of space does not give these exhibits the attention they deserve nor do them justice. It also feels rather out of place in the greater narrative to include a contemporary exhibit such as the "This Is What I Wish You Knew" exhibit as the Museum of Natural History predominantly focuses on the 'history' of Nova Scotia. If instead there were a have dedicated exhibition space with solely Mi'kmaw-focused exhibits there would be less misrepresentation in this particular museum. However, as long as there are connotations to the greater history of natural world in connection with the Mi'kmaq, there will always be misrepresentation causing dangerous and influential spatial narratives.

I believe the "This Is What I Wish You Knew" exhibit belongs in a different space, as its aim is to display some history while holding more focus on the present contemporary voices of

the Mi'kmaq. However, I do understand that marginalized groups like the Mi'kmaq do not always have the same resources that White people do and it would not be reasonable to believe that they could simply place this exhibit somewhere else. So, while the Mi'kmaq may have given consent to include the "This Is What I Wish You Knew" exhibit in the Museum of Natural History, it may be because there are no other outlets available. Therefore, while it would be easy to explain how the spatial narratives in the Museum of Natural History perpetuate harmful misrepresentations of the Mi'kmaq it is more important to bring attention the core of the problem. The problem being that until there is more support given to the local Mi'kmaw communities to build their own cultural centre or museum, these communities will continue to utilize the options they have. Even if those options result in misrepresentation, it is still the only available platform to use their voice have the public see it.

5.2 Personal Stance on the Museum of Natural History's Mi'kmaw-Focused Exhibits

While I am not a part of the Mi'kmaw community, and it is not my decision to choose, I understand why they have given consent to include their "This Is What I Wish You Knew" exhibit in the Museum of Natural History. However, once there is more funding available to these communities, I would absolutely remove all Mi'kmaq related exhibits from the Museum of Natural History as they simply do not belong in that space to give these projects proper attention. Moving forward, a possible choice that the Museum of Natural History could be to acknowledge their weaknesses in displaying their Mi'kmaw-related exhibits and how due to how they are currently situated, they do not do these exhibits justice.

However, as a mixed-race person of color, I understand while there may be good intentions, it is difficult for some White people to identify microaggressions as well as how to

avoid them. This is because without proper education and prior knowledge it can be difficult to know what you are supposed to know in order to improve. When examining museums, it is evident in their structure that they are predominantly Eurocentric in their focus. There is definitely evidence of Indigenous misrepresentation in Western European natural history museums. However, to combat this misrepresentation there is still a lot of work that needs to be done primarily consisting of educating both museum staff and visitors. To evolve as an educational institution, those who work within it must first be educated on race, misrepresentation, unconscious bias, and diversity and intersectionality to create an open learning environment.

5.3 Recommendations for Future Research

For researchers conducting similar studies, my recommendations would be to have more museums studied overall and to feasibly attempt to have in-person interviews rather than on a virtual format so that issues with technology or connection could be avoided. For future research building off of my thesis I would aim to delve deeper into exploratory movement studies in relation to spatial narrative studies, further investigate the history of natural history museums as it is rather difficult to find, and to interview more members of the Mi'kmaw community as their opinions are the ones that matter the most in relation to studies like these.

My recommendations to museum officials when curating exhibition spaces to include Mi'kmaw content in their museums would be to: have a much higher level of contact and more conversation with Mi'kmaw communities, allow Mi'kmaw communities more control over the installation and curative process, maintain relationships with the Mi'kmaq for future projects,

and maintain a high level of conversation over time so the museum can update, change, or fix sections of these exhibits as time passes to stay relevant and appropriate.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A

Common Interview Questions:

- Can you tell me about your job and position in the Museum?
    - How long have you worked for the Museum?
        - In what capacity?
- What story would you say the Museum of Natural History is trying to tell?
- Can you tell me about the current Mi'kmaw-focused exhibits at the Museum of Natural History?
    - Have these exhibits been updated or changed since their installation?
    - How often are the museum exhibits updated or changed?
    - Does the museum plan to keep these exhibits permanently?
    - What do you believe is the story that the Mi'kmaw-focused exhibits are trying to tell visitors?

- During the creation of the Mi'kmaw-focused exhibits was there much input is from Mi'kmaw communities in Nova Scotia?
    - Does/Did the museum have regular meetings with the Mi'kmaw communities so they can actively collaborate on the museum exhibits together?
    - Does the museum keep contact with these communities after the exhibits are created to regularly have new perspectives brought to the museum's attention concerning what can be updated, changed, or expanded upon?

- Can you tell me about the committee for the new First Peoples gallery that is being developed?
    - What has the process for creating a new exhibit looked like? What does it involve?
        - Challenges?
    - Factoring into creating new exhibits, in your opinion, do you find self-guided tours or facilitated tours to be the better method of learning about the museum and understanding its message?
        - Creating new exhibits?

- I noticed that the Museum of Natural History is one of many museums in the greater Nova Scotia Museum system network, do you think any more museums may be added to this collection?
    - Currently, according to the Nova Scotia Museum website, the sole mention of the Mi'kmaq is with the one permanent exhibit in the Museum of Natural History.
        - Do you believe the current permanent exhibit should be expanded to increase the amount of information within the exhibit, or potentially moved have a larger exhibit overall (if there are simply architectural expansion limitations in the current space)?

    - Currently the Mi'kmaw-focused exhibits seem to be mixed in with the Nature Lab section of the museum (by the inclusion of live animal tanks) and the Ethnology and Archaeology section.
        - Have these exhibits always been combined? Why was this decision made?
- Do you believe a new museum should be added to the Nova Scotia Museum network to be solely focused on the Mi'kmaq and their history within our province? In the same way we currently have the Black Loyalist Heritage Centre in Shelburne, the Historic Acadian Village of Nova Scotia in Pubnico, and the Highland Village in Cape Breton.
    - Or do you think it would be better to create a brand-new museum in partnership with the Mi'kmaq as both one of their own heritage centres and a part of the NS Museum Network?
    - Similarly, do you think it the NS Museum Network could almost 'adopt' one of the currently existing Mi'kmaq heritage centres into their system (such as the Mi'kmawey Debert Cultural Centre or the Millbrook Heritage & Cultural Centre)?

- In light of the Black Lives Matter Movement, has the museum been considering or trying to implement anything new in their Mi'kmaw-focused exhibit?
    - Ex. changing any language being used, etc.